



APACHE JUNCTION OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Project Goals

- To facilitate open space planning with local stakeholders and interest groups.
- To research public financing options for open space acquisition and management.

Background

Apache Junction, AZ is situated between the rapidly developing area of metropolitan Phoenix and the Superstition Mountains. Since 1983, eight local planning documents have been adopted which identify trails and open space as priority recreation components and amenities. As a result, 2,700 acres of State Trust Land along the City's north and east boundaries have been identified for open space protection. While other surrounding communities have earmarked similar lands for exclusive developments, residents and decision-makers of Apache Junction clearly desire protection of the community viewshed, access to outdoor recreation opportunities, and protecting the surrounding natural environment as an important quality of life value.

Since the full magnitude of such a land purchase exceeds local public financing capability, the final open space plan will identify crucial linkage corridors and prioritize a purchase schedule. To augment acquisition, land use ordinances will guide future growth and protect the essence of those lands that remain.

By invitation from the Mayor and City Council members, The Trust for Public Land, a national conservation organization, has joined the volunteer Open Space Planning Task Force members to help identify what public financing tools will be supported by the community for purchase of key open space land parcels.

Results of a community design charrette will provide recommended guidelines and standards for development in gateway areas to protected open space and on adjacent lands. Finally, interpretive environmental education signage and programming will be developed, including partnership with local high school students for service learning credits as tour guides and land stewards.

National Park Service Role

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program has helped assemble the Open Space Planning Task Force, convened expert speakers on topics related to the planning process – including the Trust for Public Land - and facilitated Task Force meetings to develop strategic plan recommendations for consideration by the City's Mayor and Council members. The next step is forming partnerships for implementation of the strategic plan and volunteer stewardship program development.

Public Open House Meeting on Open Space in Apache Junction,



continued

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Project Results to Date

- Formation of a 17-member Open Space Planning Task Force
- Public Open House meetings to gather input from community members regarding open space values
- Research on public financing options for open space in Apache Junction

Project Partners

- City of Apache Junction
- Apache Junction Unified School District
- Superstition Area Land Trust
- The Trust for Public Land

Contact

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Desert and View of the Goldfield Mountains in Apache Junction



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